

REMARKS

The Office Action of July 10, 2002, has been carefully reviewed, and in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

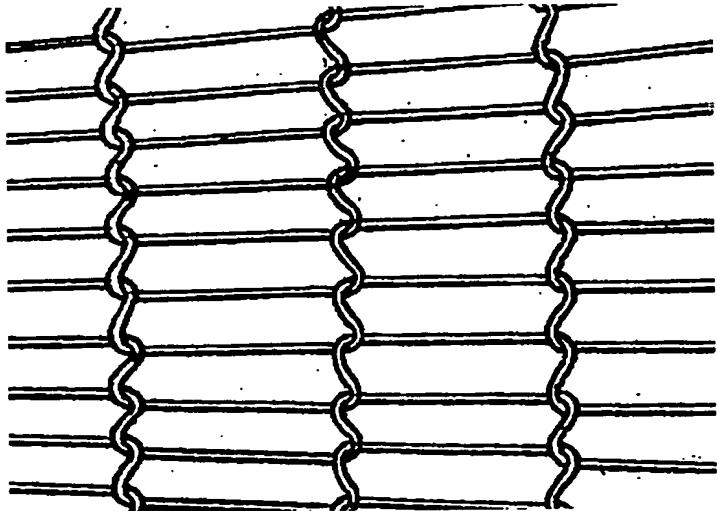
Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowance of claim 19 and the indication that claims 2, 7, 8 and 11-16 patentably distinguish over the prior art of record in the above Office Action. The Examiner has also however rejected claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and claims 1, 3-6, 9, 10, 17, 18 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,862,602 to *Greer, et al.* For at least the following reasons, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 20 has been amended to recite a first and second dimension, thereby providing a basis for referring to the third dimensional bend in the plurality of wire strands. In view thereof, Applicant contends that the rejection under Section 112 has been obviated.

Claim 1 has been amended herein to further define the compound Z-shape of the present invention as having a plurality of angled segments. As explained in the specification, the compound Z-shape of the linking portions creates parallel overlapping elements that increase joint stiffness, load capacity, and eliminates substantially all gaps between the linking portions of adjacent wire strands.

The primary reference upon which the Examiner relies, *Greer et al.*, does not disclose a compound Z-shape as defined in claim 1. *Greer et al.* discloses alternate straight portions 20 and 21 extending at a slight angle to one another, and with a series of

bent portions 27 of gradually increasing length extending between the straight portions. As illustrated in the accompanying enlarged view of the *Greer et al.* belt, the joints of *Greer et al.* are formed by bent portions, which are consistently illustrated as a continuously curving portion which forms, at best, a smooth "S" turn. There are clearly no compound Z-shaped formations, or a plurality of angled segments, as required by claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited prior art.



Claim 20 recites that the plurality of wire strands are bent to form a third dimensional bend. In contrast, *Greer et al.* only discloses that the elements extends generally transversely to the path of travel. A third dimensional bend, as most clearly illustrated in Figures 7 and 8 of the present invention, is not described or suggested by the simple zig-zag pattern of *Greer et al.* As such, Applicant contends that the rejection of claim 20 must be withdrawn.

A Request For Approval of Drawing Changes is submitted concurrently herewith. Applicant contends that the Examiner's objections to the drawings have been overcome and minor revisions have been made to maintain consistency with the specification.

In reviewing the Form PTO-1449 returned with the above-noted Office Action, Applicant notes that the U.S. patent documents have not been initialled as having been

considered by the Examiner. The Examiner is kindly requested to provide a properly initialised Form PTO-1449 indicating his consideration of these documents with the next official action.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is earnestly solicited.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the Examiner is kindly invited to call the undersigned counsel for applicant regarding the same.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: Wendi L. Weinstein
Wendi L. Weinstein
Registration No. 34,456

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620

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1. (Amended) A wire belt comprising:

a plurality of wire strands, each of said plurality of wire strands being linked with at least one adjacent wire strand in said wire belt, each of said plurality of wire strands comprising:

a first end and a second end; and

a plurality of linking portions forming an undulating shape between said first end and said second end, said plurality of linking portions being linked with respective linking portions in said at least one adjacent wire strand so as to form a plurality of joints in said wire belt, said plurality of linking portions including a compound Z-shape formation defined by a plurality of angled segments.

20. (Amended) A method of forming a wire belt comprising:

providing a plurality of wire strands,

bending each of said plurality of wire strands in at least one of a first and a second dimension and forming a plurality of linking portions between a first end and a second end, said first end including a first edge loop and said second end including a second edge loop;

bending each of said plurality of wire strands to form a third dimensional bend;

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linking said plurality of linking portions with respective linking portions in
at least one adjacent wire strand so as to form a wire belt of a predetermined length.